A SERIOUS VINDICATION OF THE Church of England;

SHEWING

The Nations Happiness

Under the Present Government.

BEING

A Seasonable Answer

To a late PAMPHLET, Entituled,

The Naked Truth.

13 Octob. 1680

By a Well-wisher to the Nations Happiness and Prosperity.

IN this sad Dissention and Division of Religion; the Seers, (who are appointed to be the *Watch-men of the Church,*) can't but observe, that the *Supplanters* and *Underminers of the Church*, (as is evidently seen) are daily (by *Papism*, *Factions*, *Sedition* and *Schisms*,) digging down the *Foundations of our Church and State*, as it is now lawfully Established: And having by such Instruments already destroy'd, so are they running fiercely on again to destroy all *Publick Forms of Ecclesiastical Government*, Discountenance an *Excellent Liturgy*, take off the very *Hinges of Unity*, Disgrace the *Articles of a Pure Religion*, Pollute *Publick Assemblies*, take away all *Cognizance of Schism*, by *mingling all* SECTS, and giving *Countenance to That*, against which our *Power* ought to stand upon

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our Guard, againſt ſuch *Rebellious*, *Self-Intereſted*, and *Bloody-minded People*, as we have (more is the Pity,) in this our Kingdom. They, who have ſeen this our *Jeruſalem* ſo much involv'd in our late *Unhappy Uncivil Wars*, and liv'd under the *Tirany of Traytors and Uſurpers*, who *Impriſon'd and Murder'd* their Good KING of *ever Bleſſed Memory*; and *Impriſon'd*, *Sequeſter'd*, *Plunder'd*, and *Beheaded* our *Nobility*, *Gentry* and *People*, (for which many ſuffer to this Day;) And our now *Dread Soveraign*, and the *Royal Family* forc'd to flie for Refuge into *ſtrange Nations*; The *Miniſters of the Church* turn'd out, and *Barbarouſly Uſed*; And a Company of *Perverſe* and *Wicked Wretches*, (who Preach'd nothing but *Sedition and Rebellion* againſt the *King* and *Government*,) were put into their Places, and all this done under the Cloak of *Religion*, and being thereunto Inſpir'd by a *Holy Zeal*, (as they always pretend.) And thus, in ſhort, were We *inſlav'd* under thoſe *Holy Tirants*, till God of his Infinite Mercy and Providence brought home our *Moſt Gracious King* to his *Lawful Throne* again, and Reſtor'd the True Church to its former Proſperity, which God Preſerve from all its *Malitious Oppoſers*, &c. And ſhall we forget all this? and the Order of the Morning and Evening Sacrifices, and the Beauty of the *Temple*? and be Tempted to Neglect ſo *Excellent a Miniſtration*? and be content with any thing that is brought to us, though it be but the very *Huſks* and *Acorns* of *Prodigals* and *Swine*, ſo They may get *Money* by it? We muſt now take care that the *Young Men* who were born under that *Captivity*, may be taught how to Worſhip the *God of Iſrael* after the manner of their Fore-fathers; For, never did the Excellency of *Epiſcopal Government* appear ſo Demonſtratively and Conſpicuouſly as now under their Conduct and Order; For We have a Church, ſo United, ſo Orderly, ſo Govern'd; A *Religion* ſo Settled; *Articles* ſo True, Sufficient, and Confeſſed by all ſober Men; *Canons*, ſo Prudent, and ſo Obeyed; *Devotions*, ſo Regular, and ſo Conſtant; *Sacraments*, ſo Adorned, and Miniſtred; *Churches*, ſo Beautious and Religious; *Circumſtances*, ſo Grave and Prudent, ſo Uſeful and Apt for Edification, that the Enemies of our Church, (who ſerve the *POPE* in all things, and [illegible] *Chriſt* in ſome; who dare tranſgreſs an Inſtitution and Ordinance of CHRIST, but dare not break a Canon of the *POPE*,) did Deſpair of prevailing againſt Us and Truth; and know no Hopes, but by ſetting their Faces againſt Us, to Deſtroy the beſt of Governments; which if they could, then they would Triumph without having any Enemy: So *Bâlaam* the Son of *Eozer*, was ſent for to Curſe the People of the Lord, in hopes that the Son of *Zippor* might prevail againſt them that long proſper'd under the Conduct of *Moſes* and *Aaron*.

But now inſtead of this Excellency of Condition, and Conſtitution of *Religion*, the People are Seduced, and fallen under the Harrows and Saws of *Faction*, *Sedition*, *Railing*, *Deſpiſing*, *Drolling*, *Impertinent and Ignorant*, *Self-Intereſting* Solemn League and Covenanting *Preachers*, who think all *Religion* is a *Sermon*, and all *Sermons* ought to be *Libels* againſt *Truth* and *Government*; who think they are Saints, and none like them, when they are great *Hypocrites*, and *Wolves* in Sheeps-clothing, for by their

Fruits

Fruits you may know them; who Expound Chapters, that the meaning may never be understood; and Pray, that they may be thought able to Talk, but not to hold their peace; Who speak Evil of *Dignities*, Resist the *Power* and *Ordinances of God*; who take up *Religion* for a Cloak, who Delude silly *Women* to Cheat their *Husbands*; who care not to obtain any thing but *Wealth* and *Victory*, *Power*, and *Plunder*; And all the People do reap the Fruits thereof that are apt to grow upon such Crab-stocks: They grow *Idle* and *False*, *Hypocrites*, and *careless*; They deny Themselves nothing that is *pleasant*; They *Despise Religion*, Forget *Government*, and some of them never so much as think of going to Heaven; And if at any time they chance to do, They think to go thither in such Paths, which all the Ages of the Primitive Church did give Men warning of, lest they should that way go to the Devil. But when Men have tryed all that they can, it is hoped they will return to the Excellency and Advantages of the true Christian Religion as it is taught by the Church of *England*; For, by Destroying it, no End can be served, but of *Sin* and *Folly*, *Faction*, and *Death Eternal*: For besides that, no Church that is an Enemy to this, does *Worship God* in that Truth of *Propositions*, in that Unblamable and Pious Liturgie, and in Preaching the Necessities of *Holy Life*, so much as the Church of *England* does. Besides this, (I say,) it cannot be persecuted by any Governour that understands his own Interest, unless He be first abused by *False Preachers*, and then prefers his secret Opinion, before his Publick Advantage: For no Church in the World is so great a Friend to *Loyalty* and *Obedience*, as She, and her Sisters of the same Persuasion; She Preaches no *Rebellion against her Prince*, and is no Councellor, Contriver, or Projector of *PLOTS* and *Conspiracies*, but a True Lover of *Peace* and *Quietness*, &c. They that hate *Bishops*, destroy *Monarchy*; And They that would Erect an *Ecclesiastical Monarchy*, must consequently subject the *Temporal* to it; and both One and the Other would be Supreme in Consciences: And they that Govern there, with an Opinion that in all things they ought to be attended to, will let their *Prince* Govern others, so long as he will be Ruled by Them. And certainly, for a *Prince* to persecute the Established *Protestant Religion*, is, as if a Physician should endeavour to Destroy all Medicaments, and Fathers kill their Sons, and the Masters of Ceremonies Destroy all Formalities and Courtships; And, as if the *Pope* should root out all *Ecclesiastick State*. Nothing so Combines with Government (if it be of Gods appointment,) as the *Religion* of the Church of *England*; becaus nothing doth more adhere to the *Word of God*, and dis-regard the Crafty Advantages of the World. If any Man shall not decline to try his Title by the *Word of God*, It is certain, there is not in the World a better Guard for it than the *True Protestant Religion*, as it is taught in our Church; For it is *Via Tuta*, the safe way: And certain it is, that in that day we shall prevail against all *Gods Enemies* and Ours, not in the Purchaces and Riches of the World, but in the Rewards and Returns of Holiness and Patience, Faith and Charity; For by these we Worship God, and against this Interest we cannot serve any thing else. And there is none can leave our Communion, or have Reason to reprove

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our Doctrine, unleſs they be abus'd with Prejudice, and ſuck in Venom with their Milk: And there is a more ſolid Comfort, and Material ſupport to a Chriſtian Spirit in *one Article of Faith*, in *one Period of the Lords Prayer*, in *one Holy Leſſon*, than in all the Diſputes of the Impertinent Rabble, who take more pains to prove there is no *Purgatory*, than to perſwade Men to avoid *Hell*: And that a plain *Catechiſm* can more Inſtruct a Soul, than the whole days prate which ſome uſually ſpit forth, to bid them *get Chriſt*, and perſecute his Servants.

It will not be unneceſſary to tell you in part, (as I did at the beginning, how our Kingdoms were Ruined, as is too well known,) how our Divines were perſecuted, how our Churches were Demoliſh'd, and made Stables by Sacrilegious *Rebels* aud *Tirants*; And it's evidently ſeen at this day, That there are abundance of ſuch Saints among us, (and if not timely prevented,) may play the Devils Game over again: For have they not began already to Rebel in *Scotland?* They killed in a moſt Barbarous manner the Arch-biſhop of St. *Andrews*, &c. What Impious, Deviliſh and Helliſh *Declarations*, and *Covenants* lately by them openly proclaimed? How many *Conventicles* are there contrary to Law? How are our Orthodox Divines moſt ſcurrilouſly ſlander'd by them? How bold and Audacious are they, daily to publiſh Anſwers? *Joque*, *Droll*, *Libel* and *Aſperſe* our Able Divines? How many go under the notion of *Proteſtants*, (for in Diſcourſe they ſay they are ſo,) when really they are none, For you ſhall have them all the week Railing againſt the preſent *Government*, frighten the People into Fears and Jealouſies at *Coffee-houſes*, *Booksellers ſhops*, *Private Caballs* and *Factions Clubs* up and down the Town; And on Sunday they'l run to a Conventicle, and there exhort their ignorant Congregation to do the like, *&c.* Much more might be ſaid; But I ſhall conclude, with my hearty Prayers that all our Differences may be compoſed, and that we may be United in one True Church, and that God would ſave and Defend Us from the Hands of all our Enemies, and Infatuate their wicked Deſigns; That we may ſtudy Peace, and not Wars, Strife, Confuſion and Diſcention, which lead to the ways of Deſtruction: That God would Bleſs, Preſerve, Defend and Keep His Sacred Majeſty from the Hands of all his Enemies, and to give him Victory over them, and ſend him a Long, Happy and Proſperous Reign over Us; And that We may live in Gods Fear, and in Duty and Obedience to Our *King*: And God bleſs the Great Councel of the Nation the *Parliament*; And when they ſhall be Aſſembled, to Direct and Proſper all their Conſultations to the Advancement of Gods Glory, the Safety, Honour and Welfare of our Dread Soveraign, and Kingdoms, That Peace and Happineſs, Truth and Juſtice, Religion and Piety, may be Eſtabliſhed amongſt Us to all Generations; And let all True Subjects with me, ſay, *Amen.*

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